

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

NOTES ON GARTHOFF, 1989 (SEE MY FILE): Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis, May, 1989, Raymond L. Garthoff, Brookings, revised edition (of 1987 original)

DE SOTO:

P. 69-70, : N113 "An incident that fortunately did *not* happen deserves mention. Several days into the crisis, a member of the Ex Comm in his other duties by chance became aware of another **routine ongoing** operation that should have been reconsidered under crisis conditions. A U.S. intelligence-collection ship for intercepting communications was **perilously close** to Cuban waters. No one had remembered it until then; it was promptly ordered to move a safe distance away. No incident occurred. Robert Kennedy noted the incident, but presented a brief account that misleadingly implied it was an example of careful foresight. See Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, p. 86.

"There is a strong tendency to ignore lessons from near-misses; in 1967 a similar ship in a similar situation, the *Liberty*, was attacked by Israeli aircraft and ships, and in 1968 its sister-ship, the *Pueblo*, was captured by the North Koreans."

(his italics, my bold)

Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, W.W. Norton (NY) paperback 1969 edition (copyright McCall's, 1968)

P. 85: "Friday morning" [October 26, 1962, the day before Black Saturday] President Kennedy ordered the State Department to proceed with preparations for a crash program on civil government in Cuba to be established after the invasion and occupation of that country. Secretary McNamara reported the conclusion of the military that we should expect very heavy casualties in an invasion.

"The President turned to us all: 'We are going to have to face the fact that, if we do invade, by the time we get to these sites, after a very bloody fight, they will be pointed at us. And we must further accept the **possibility** that when military hostilities first begin [that would be, on air attack!], those missiles will be fired.'"

...[McCone: invasion will be harder than many expect.]

p. 86: "Despite the heavy pressure on the big decisions, President Kennedy followed every detail. He requested, for instance, the names of all the Cuban doctors in the Miami area, should their services be required in Cuba. Learning that a U.S. military ship with extremely sensitive equipment (similar to the *Liberty*, which was struck by Israel during the Israeli-Arab war) was **very close** to the coast of Cuba, he ordered it further out to sea,

where it would be less vulnerable to attack. He supervised everything, from the contents of leaflets to be dropped over Cuba to the assembling of ships for the invasion."

Neither of

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Notes on Gribkov and Smith, Operation Anadyr

Khrushchev saw US aggressive plans on Cuba as threatening a **loss** of Soviet credibility as a superpower: inability to defend its ally in the Caribbean. (In other words, he saw Cuba not only as a political expansion, when Castro enlisted in the Soviet and Communist cause (as a result of US pressures), and as an ally to be defended, romantically; but as a potential **loss** for the Soviets (not only a loss for Cuban Communists).

He saw rockets in Turkey as a first strike threat (which is what they were, all they were, as AJW pointed out in Foreign Affairs, 1960! And I did—refer to this! —in my AER article, Crude Analysis.) He saw that emplacement (and the 17 to 1 strategic forces advantage: check p.11: Gilpatric!) as evidence that JFK intended to use his nuclear advantage to force the Soviets to desert their new ally in the Caribbean. (!!!) (Nuclear advantage, wrt. Cuba? McG B felt it had no bearing. But K might well have seen that it was that advantage that permitted the US to move against Cuba with confidence that K would not move on Turkey and Berlin. BUT JFK thought, in fact, that K WOULD move on Turkey and Berlin if he attacked Cuba! And it's not clear that K thought of that at all, in the crisis! The nuclear advantage was not what permitted us to move in the Caribbean; all it meant was that we could threaten to invade Cuba without admitting publicly that JFK expected countermoves on Turkey or Cuba, or at least that they would be pressed to the point of nuclear war. Yet that's what JFK thought K was capable of...which he himself was not willing to face.

He also saw it as a threat to his rivalry with China for supremacy as leader of communism; Chinese leaders would have “crowed” if he had allowed Cuba to fall.

[K could never have protected Cuba—as we protected Berlin—with ICBMs in the SU. There the nuclear advantage ruled that out. (It was crazy for us, for that matter). Soviet troops in Cuba could have been enough: was that considered? Even more: tac nucs; they were NOT considered initially, in May. But they wouldn't have affected the balance. 40 MRBMs didn't do much toward that, either; but hundreds, or “a thousand” (Castro) would have!

So it was the exact counterpart (except probably for domestic rivalry) of the US fear of “losing SVN”! Dominos...international prestige...see quote of Khrushchev's memoirs. “What will happen if we lose Cuba?” This concern was never discussed in the ExComm, since more than half its members were not aware that there was any reality to a Soviet fear of “losing Cuba” under JFK! As if NVN, China or SU had not been aware that the US feared the consequences of “losing VN.”